



From April 2021 (Volume 116)





Photo History



Delightful animal figures close to Tintern disused railway station

Cover Picture

May 17th 2021

..still working from behind and catching up with these volumes.

Family update..

Tammy is having the house redecorated and it is looking great. Larnie and Tammy are really doing so well and remembering the wonderful Ben in a sensible and constructive way. Larnie is still working hard for Hotel Chocolate and Jake seems to be a very major part of her social agenda.. She often stays here and the dynamic between us all is unique. DP is often seeing the kids and he gets on well with Angela (as we do as well). Binkie seems happy and we hope to see more of her. We have a Whatsapp 'family' group with Israel, Berlin, Enfield, Bath and Bristol family so it's so great to chat informally together.

Lynn is still running in the mornings and I have resumed my early swims. I am eating too much however and I pass everything...except the fridge.

My school volunteering has ended as I did not think it sensible to continue with a new school where possibly I was putting myself at risk (and therefore, putting Lynn and other at risk). My mentoring Barbara is very fulfilling and I enjoy that challenge.

Garden and allotment are also a big part of our lives and we are looking forward to our three scheduled holiday/breaks.

The tube trip to John Lewis at the weekend was a first for months and many stores/shops/restaurants have closed permanently so the new face of town will be changing rapidly. Today is the first day when people can gather inside in restaurants again and also gatherings of up to 30 in houses are allowed.

Many are sceptical and worried that this 'freeing up' of society may involve a reoccurrence of Covid so everyone is watching the situation with fear.

A traffic light situation is now in operation with every country allowing/not allowing entry and re-entry here sometimes requiring isolation after a visit often being compulsory. Many different rules and many of us are totally perplexed not knowing if we are adhering to the rules.

The Israel and Gaza situation is worsening and I will update information through this volume as it unfolds.

Weatherwise: this is possibly the wettest May we have known and we grasp a few rays of sunshine quickly whenever possible. A hot late June is forecast so we are eagerly waiting for it.

June'21 ...Since writing the above, we have had a scorching period (during which we managed to do our long-awaited Gilpiin Walk which was a Wye Valley Walk) and we enjoyed the incredible weather. It changed to the wettest days imaginable almost as soon as we returnedso someone's looking after us!

This volume shows a slow return (by us anyway) to a more 'usual' way of life but the pandemic is still no way nearly over and the total death rate in South America (Brazil) was announced yesterday (20th June 2021) as topping 500, 000 yesterday)...a sombre note to end this volume on



Photo History



We took the tube and Overground to Brick Lane, which was almost deserted and saw the unlikely Spitalfields City Farm with bored donkeys below the city towers..



Possibly not the best choice of names for a fish restaurant



Graffiti, salt beef sandwiches and some interesting art as always





Photo History



Beau stayed with us for a week and really looked great prior to 'enjoying' work experience in the city





I organised a walk from Little Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire with Gerald, Stephen, Cyril, Norman and myself and we took advantage of the River Lee to enjoy our picnic lunch as pubs were still 'verboden'





In May 2021 Cyril, Stephen and myself did a main walk early recce at Sarrat and managed to book a pub lunch for the group. I mention this as it was the first time for ages that this has been allowed.







Later in May the main Sarrat walk took place and as everyone was 'itching' to get out get out after the long lockdown it was really well attended and we all enjoyed the walk but best of all the pub lunch was magic...



It certainly took longer than I remember it...maybe the groans and sighs when climbing the stiles slowed us up..
However the checking of the beer delivery ales was all in order!!



Photo History



After a grim few months we were delighted to see Tammy enjoying herself so much at her 52nd birthday party. She looked great and hard to believe we now have such an 'old' daughter and us still so young !! The party was an Alice in Wonderland theme and Larnie went to town secretly organising so much. The singer was fantastic and we watched the enjoyment on everyone's faces (it was supposed to be a 'tea' but by all accounts some folk were still at Tammy until the early hours...well past our bedtime.

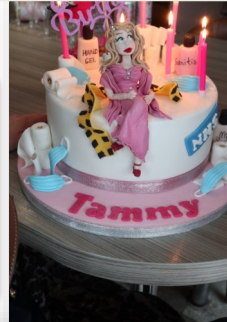
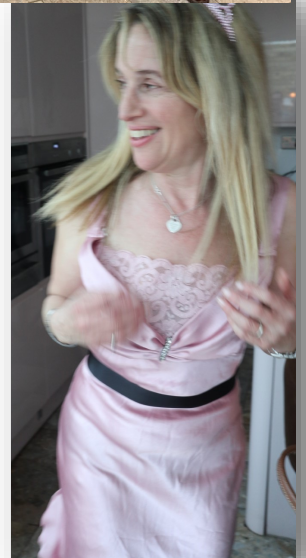




Photo History



Stephen Dunnett , vocalist





One of my favourite walks: along the Beaune from Bulls Mill towards Stapleford. Gerald, Cyril, Ivor (with Django) and myself





Photo History



This river path is well known for its gigantic roman snails seen here being petted by Gerald (before eating it??)





The boardwalk is being replaced in Grovelands and this is great as it allows a less muddy way of enjoying the water marsh area.



These delightful goslings change rapidly into large Canada geese





Photo History



I think Milan and I did a great job of 'tidying up' our verge outside.

Southgate Council ...eat your heart out and be ashamed...very ashamed!!

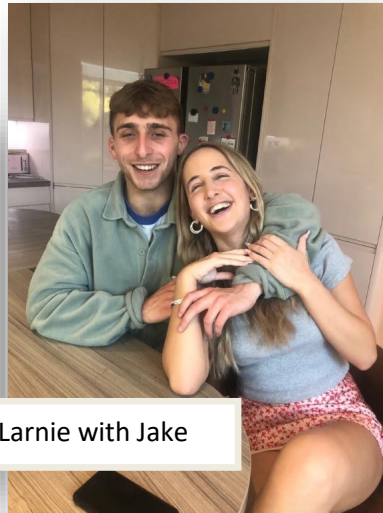




Photo History



Tammy with great friend Babs



Larnie with Jake



The dynamic duo



Jake, Larnie & Tammy



I managed to get this almost identical ring made by Rachel Gera to replace the one stolen long ago



Anoraks
on ...ready
for the
downpour



There is definitely a family resemblance



Lynn and I took a footpath in Hertfordshire which took in Goldings, which was originally a large stately then an orphanage and finally Hertfordshire architects department before being sold off as a fascinating development of houses and apartments in acres of landscaped grounds





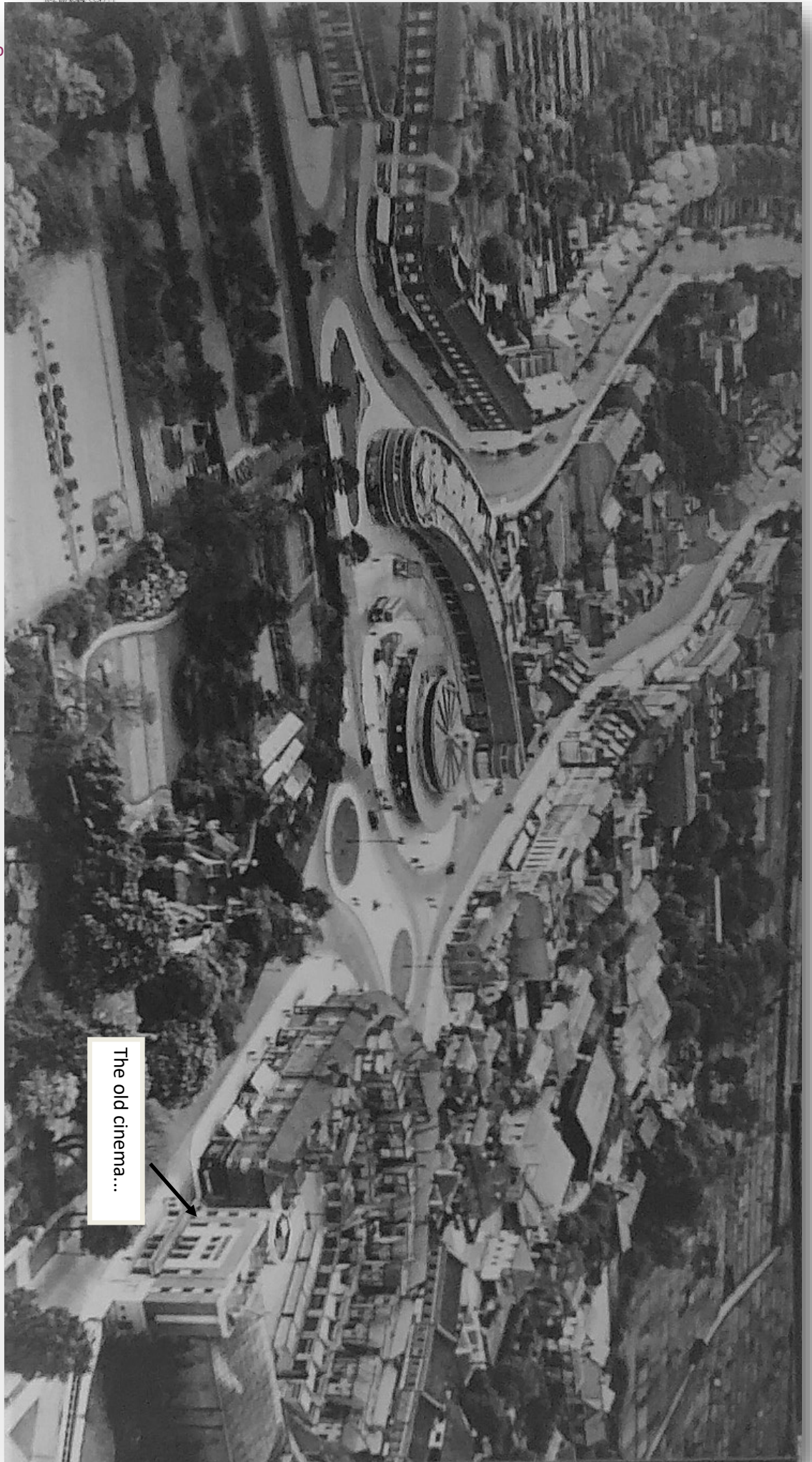
Photo History

The footpath went through their field...but we decided to give it a detour





...sorry about having to display this old shot (seen on the wall in ASDA) but I wanted to show as much detail as possible.



The old cinema...

This is where we live now



June 2021....





Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser



One of our first outings after lockdown was a long-awaited exhibition at the V&A. (Lynn and I had been 'avatars' on line at an invited pre-view presentation which was amazing. The exhibition was very good and socially distanced including a virtual reality session with complete immersion but it was too stuffy to fully enjoy. Here are some of the images taken from so many on display..





Photo History



Paintings, cinema stills, real installations made it a fascinating variety of media..





Photo History



I guess the designers would be proud if they saw the delight in the kids' faces...totally fascinated by the exhibits



These imaginative light shows were well thought out





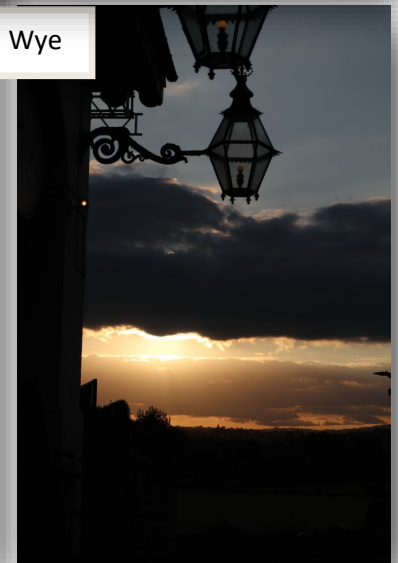
In June '21 Lynn and I did another organised walk. This one was called The Gilpin Trail which followed an original route that was considered the birth-place of British Tourism . It was a 5 walking day trip mainly following The

River Wye on the Welsh border. We arranged a rest day mid term. To make it easier we opted to drive to the finishing town of Chepstow where we managed to find a car park that was free for the week (due to a non-operating payment machine.) We then got a taxi to the start point at Ross-On-Wye.. Great weather was provided..



Around the lovely old town of Ross-On Wye

Our hotel—The Royal



The market area

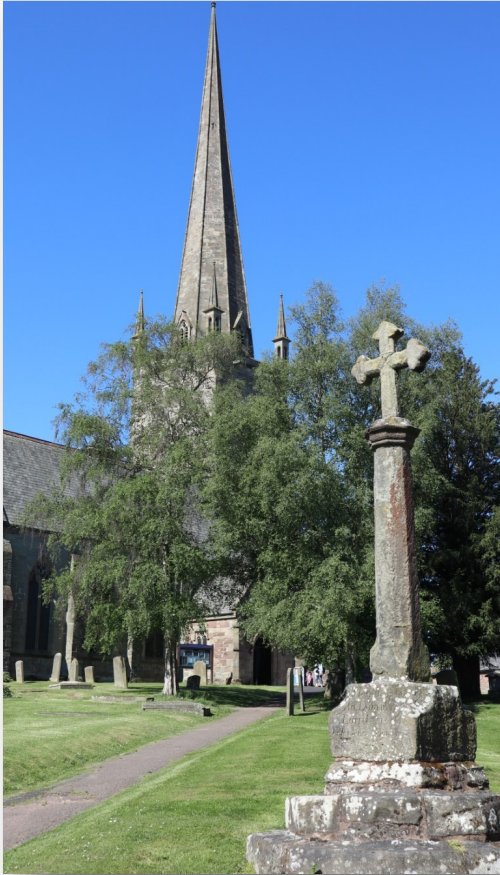




Photo History



St Marys the Virgin , built in 1316 with possibly Roman underlying structures



The Leaping Salmon Sculpture next to The man of Ross pub



Redstone Tudor alms-houses

The first day we walked approx. 7 miles from Ross-On-Wye to Kerne Bridge

Prospect Gardens





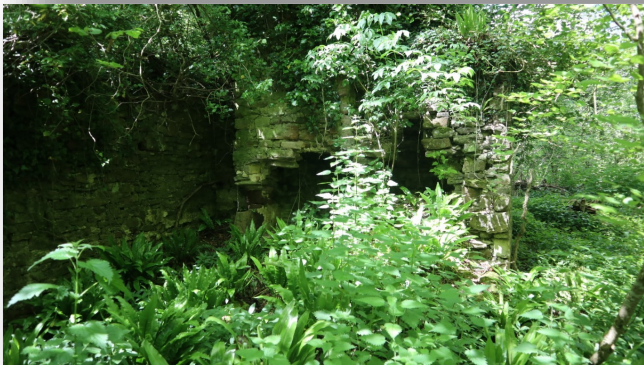
Morning dew on spiders web
make fascinating studies





This is Kerne Bridge

We stayed here overnight..in
The Inn On the Wye



This is the disused factory which produced the entire World War 1 field telephone cable and other fine wire products

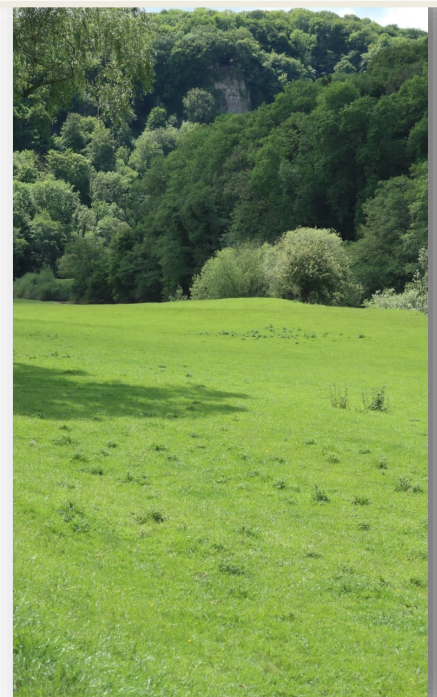


Lydbrook
(disused rail-
way) Bridge

We passed ruins of
cottages and farm
holdings where
small scale quarry-
ing took place



The disused railway tunnel



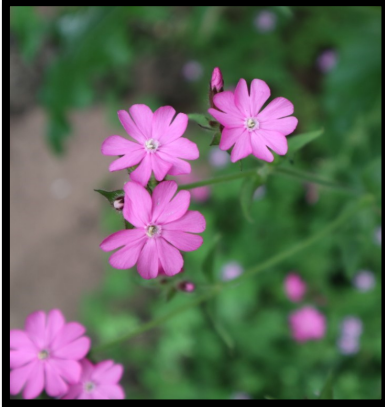


Kayaking on The Wye



Lynn spotted this monster
crawling out of the river





Kerne Bridge to Symond's Yat –approx. 10 miles



Fly Fishing on The Wye



Canoes at Symond's Yat East





Photo History

Symond's Yat (East)

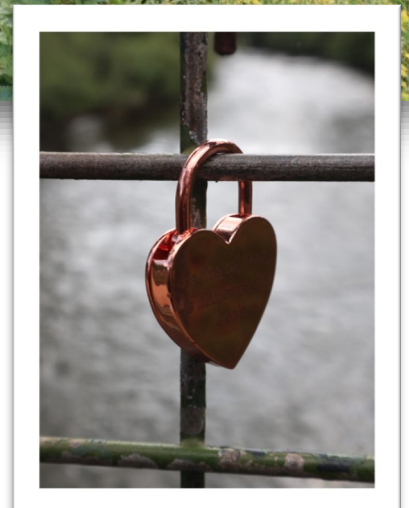
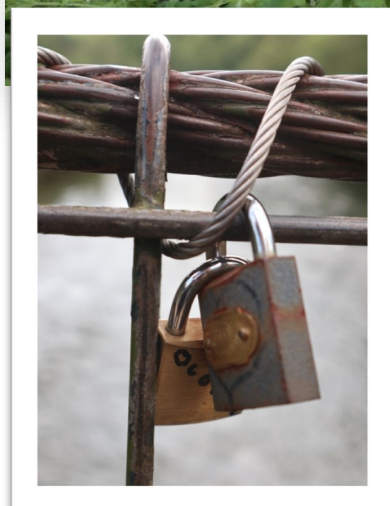
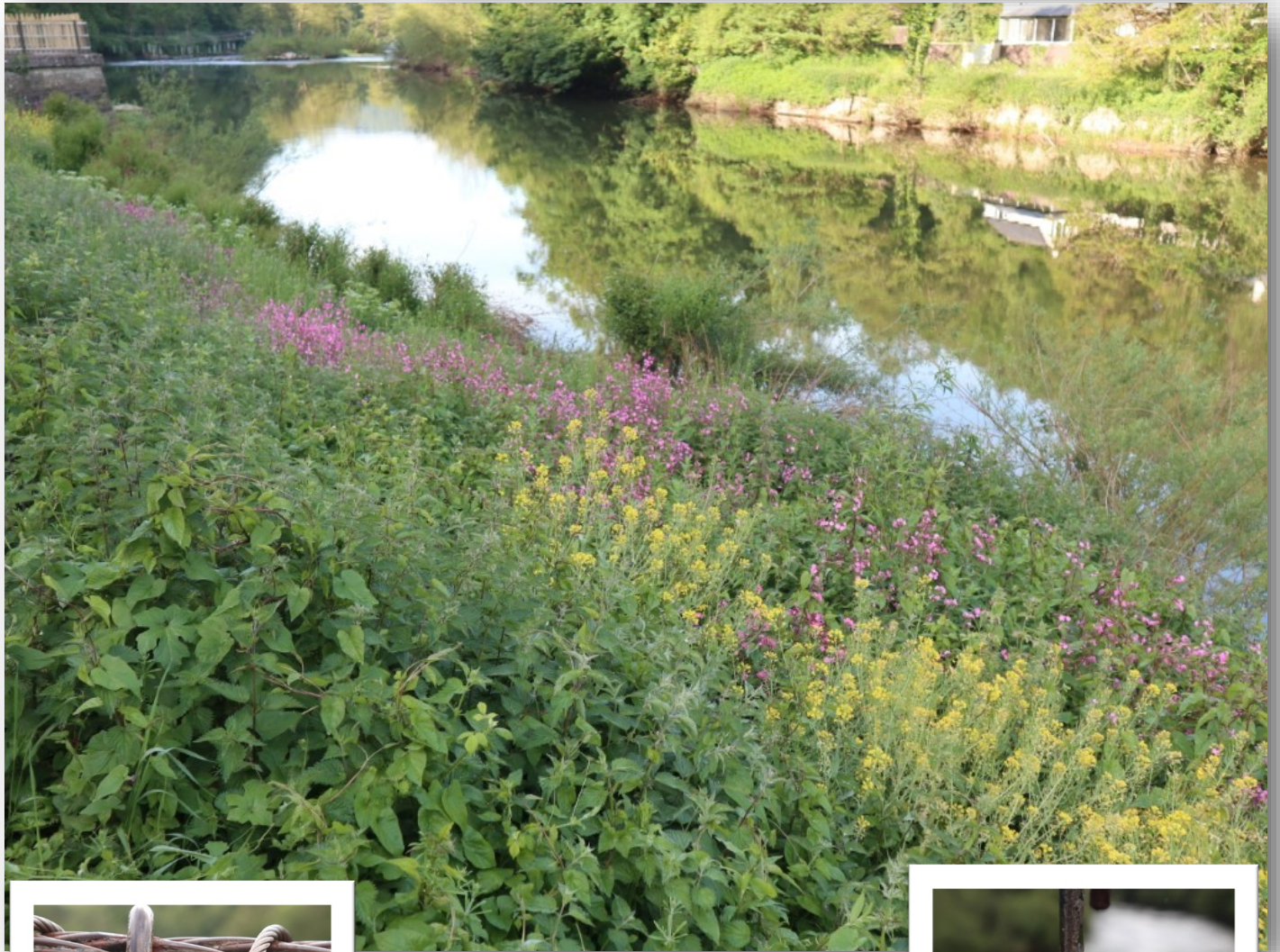




Photo History





Photo History



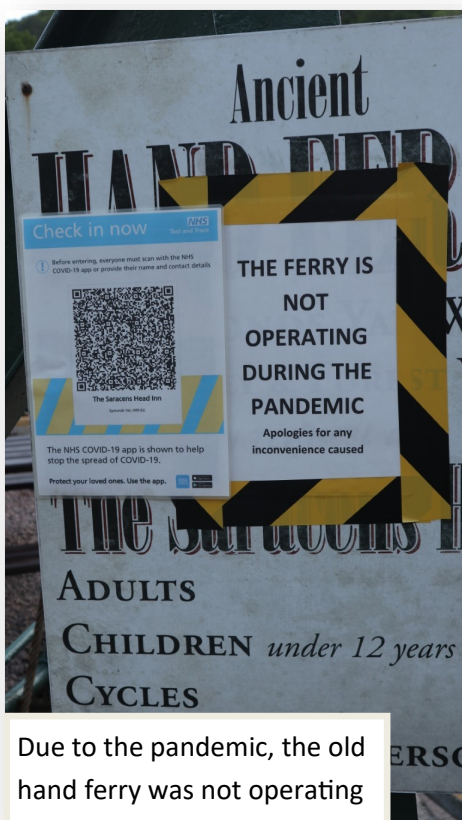
Our Hotel, The Saracen's Head at Symond's Yat



View from our room



Early evening



Due to the pandemic, the old hand ferry was not operating



Marquee for outside eating



Canoeists on the rapids

The Duke of Beaufort
Bridge . (Now disused)



Biblin's Suspension Bridge

Biblin's Suspension bridge across to Wales



On the Welsh border



Monmouth railway bridge -
Monmouth Museum

The Wye Valley Railway Monmouth Viaduct - being built and (below) now disused





We had lunch in Monmouth and the continued our walk (approx. 10 miles) to Redbrook



We stayed in Inglewood House with the delightful Siobhan who, it transpired, was good friends with Ben Freeman a great friends of DP—what a coincidence



As there was no food available in Redbrook we had pre-arranged fish & chip in the local pub marquee...and it was great



Photo History



A really beautiful area to walk in...tranquil and sunny





From Redbrook we walked approx. 10 miles to Tintern mainly along the Wye via Brockweir



The iron bridge at Redbrook

The view from Brockweir Bridge

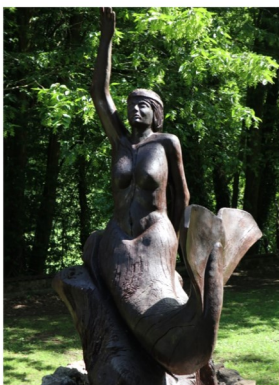


This was originally a hive of activity with cargoes frequently being transferred to and from seagoing ships





Some of the delightful art work leading to the station





Tintern Station is no longer in use and is a delightful play area, tea shop and we discovered this great guy carving wooden statues and edifices





The ruins of Tintern Abbey set against this wonderful backdrop are really wonderful.







Photo History



Around Tintern





Photo History



...some folk really tour in style



This is all that is left of the original ford crossing



FRYER'S WHARF AND SLIPWAY

Fryer's Wharf is a long neglected, almost forgotten landmark in Tintern's cultural heritage. The adjacent church of St. Michael's is Tintern's oldest place of worship. The entrance to the church and the entrance to Fryer's wharf slipway almost coincide. They are equidistant from the village cross, the stone of which is still visible in the wall. The slipway once led to a ford across the Wye, negotiable on foot at low tide until the monks from the abbey created Ash weir on the Chepstow side of Tintern Parva. Thus, the slipway, the wharf and the church all predate the abbey by several centuries. Opposite the slipway, at low water, the exit from the ford on the Gloucestershire side is evident even now. A track from it climbs through the woods to the ancient camp at Madgetts (Modes Gate).

How interesting it is to imagine Saxons walking down to Tintern, crossing the river to make their way up to Trellech and thence to Monmouth. Meanwhile, sea going and smaller craft would be using the wharf and slipway all within sight of the local churchgoers.

Presently, the area is moribund, though steps are afoot to recreate its former status. One day, with the cooperation of Welsh Water, the removal of the utilitarian pumping station and the clearance of rubbish and infill will, once again, permit boat owners unimpeded and safe river access and inspire visitors and residents alike with a profound sense of Tintern's history.



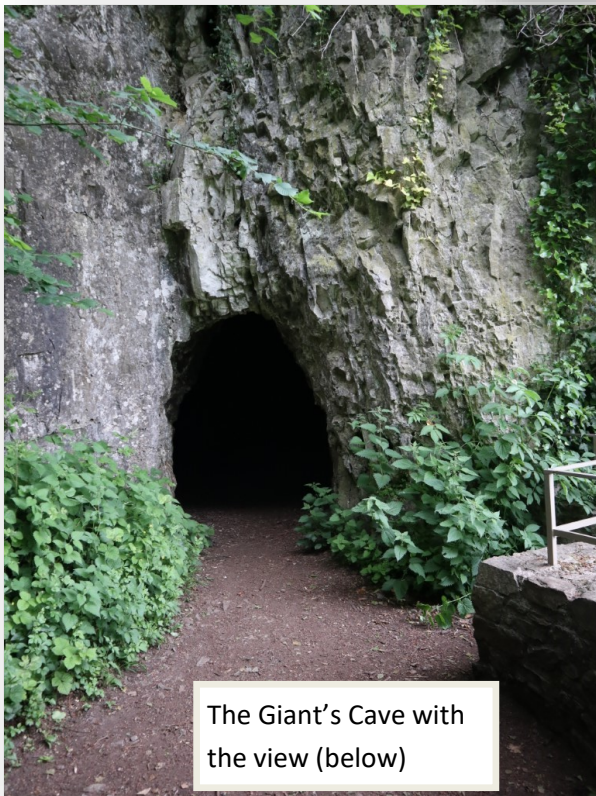
Photo History



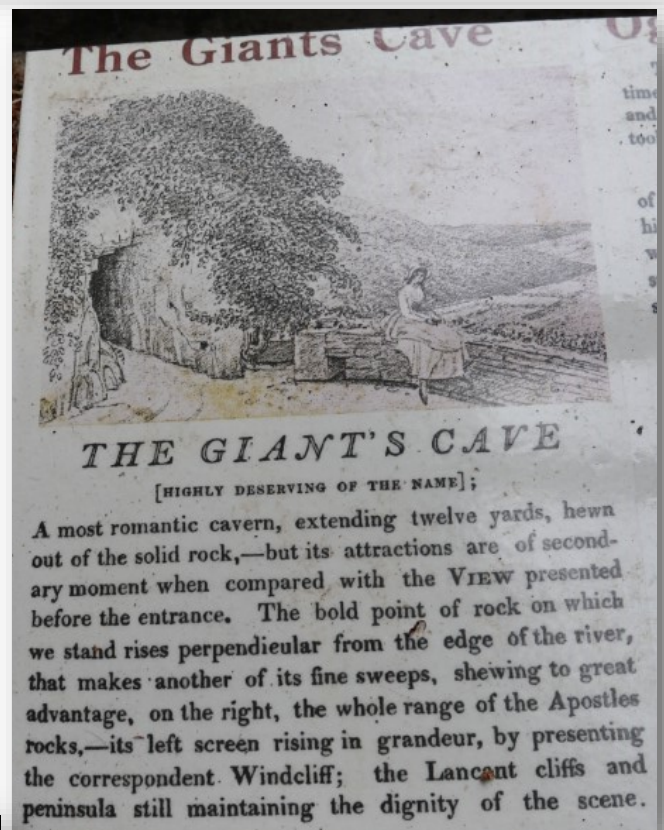
The final leg of our journey took us 5.5 hours from Tintern to Chepstow and was a hilly route through woodland and was very lush



The Wild Hare in Tintern, where we stayed for two nights



The Giant's Cave with the view (below)



THE GIANT'S CAVE
[HIGHLY DESERVING OF THE NAME];
A most romantic cavern, extending twelve yards, hewn out of the solid rock,—but its attractions are of secondary moment when compared with the VIEW presented before the entrance. The bold point of rock on which we stand rises perpendicular from the edge of the river, that makes another of its fine sweeps, shewing to great advantage, on the right, the whole range of the Apostles rocks,—its left screen rising in grandeur, by presenting the correspondent Windcliff; the Llanent cliffs and peninsula still maintaining the dignity of the scene.





View from the Eagles' Nest
over the Severn estuary



A grotto in the woodland



About the Reserve

This unique nature reserve is one of the best wildlife woodlands in Wales and is the southern gateway to the Lower Wye Valley Woods, a nationally important and designated landscape.

Conserved as part of the Piercefield Estate, it has matured over centuries to support an array of gnarled, veteran trees, where 750 year old Yew trees mix with ancient beech to support some of the rarest 'deadwood' beetles in the UK. Beneath a canopy of Ash, Small-Leaved Lime, oak and beech trees grows a diversity of shrubs such as Wild Privet, Dogwood, Hazel and Whitebeams, some 'endemic' to the Wye Valley. Together they provide shade for ancient woodland indicator species such as Bluebells and Herb Paris and support exceptional insects such as Scarce Hook-tip moths.

Peregrines are often seen or heard nesting on the limestone cliffs opposite, Hawfinch feed on autumnal beech and Hornbeam mast and several, scarce bat species forage on their nocturnal visits. Ferns, mosses and fungi proliferate, clinging to rocks, bark and the damp woodland floor.

Piercefield Woods' amazing views, array of historic features and rare wildlife provides an exceptional and irreplaceable woodland experience.

As we arrived in Chepstow we met a young lady who took her children daily from Tintern to Chepstow. The journey takes her 15 minutes. We had walked for over 5 hours No comment!



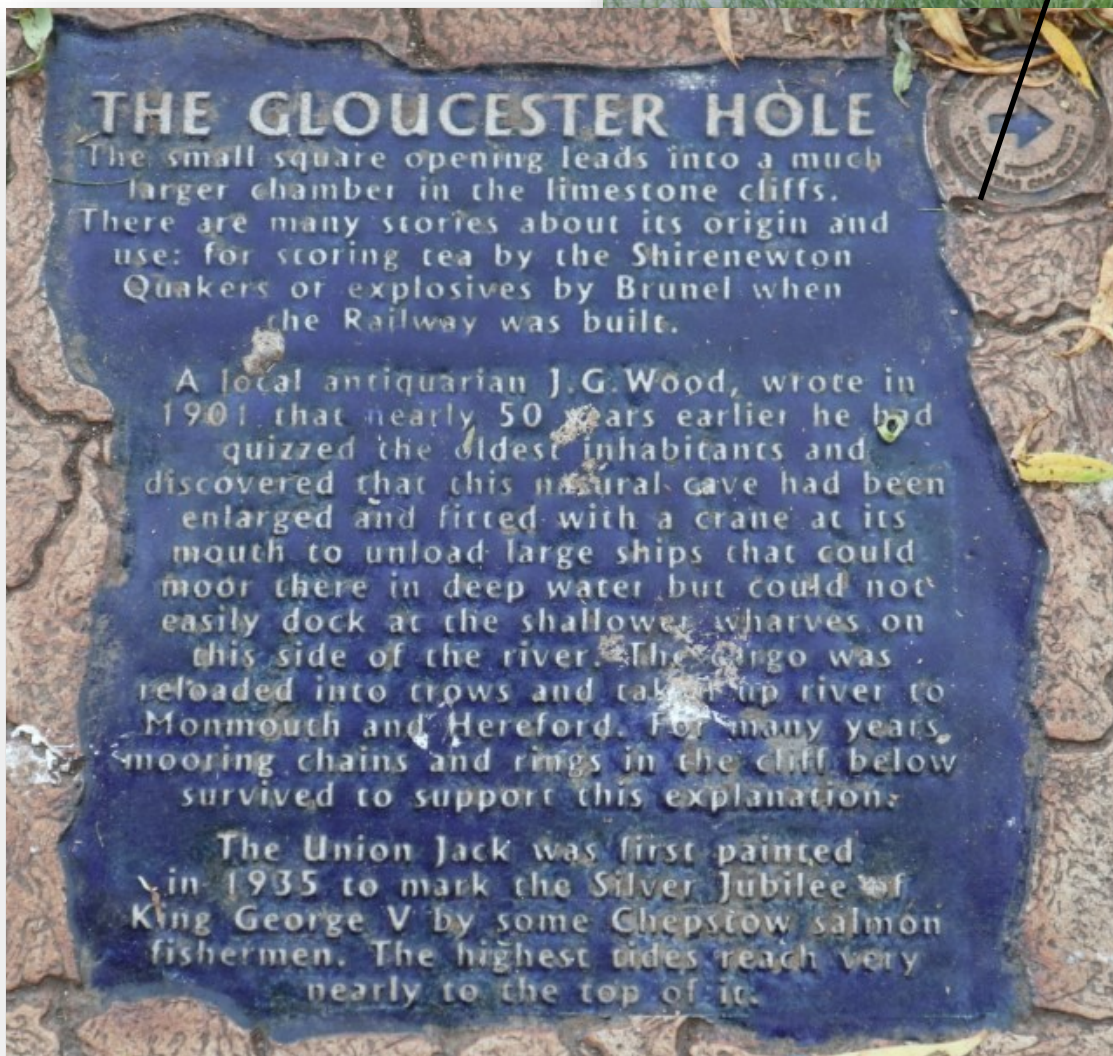
Walk the Wye

This is the start (or finish) of the Wye Valley Walk which follows the river Wye along the English-Welsh border and off to its source on Plynlimon, high in the Cambrian Mountains of mid Wales. Legend has it that the three daughters of Plynlimon – the Wye, the Rheidol and the Severn – discussed the best way to flow to the sea and the Wye chose the prettiest route. By the time you have completed the 136 mile Wye Valley Walk we are sure you will agree.



The Wye bridge in Chepstow





We saw this hole from the opposite bank and then found this fascinating explanation



Panevino...our final night fantastic meal. On the terrace watching the tidal rise of the Wye . A perfect ending



Chepstow Castle at the
end of a great walk

